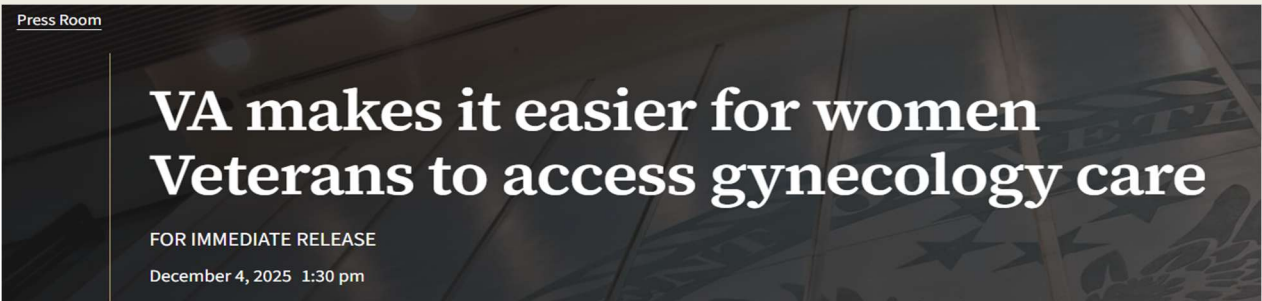


# VACRICO RUNDOWN

## VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF ROCK ISLAND COUNTY



### Veteran News

**AUTHOR NAME:** [HTTPS://NEWS.VA.GOV/PRESS-ROOM/VA-MAKES-IT-EASIER-FOR-WOMEN-VETERANS-TO-ACCESS-GYNECOLOGY-CARE/](https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-makes-it-easier-for-women-veterans-to-access-gynecology-care/)

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### POINTS OF CONTACT

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VACRICO Superintendent  
Brad Bigford  
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VACRICO General Information  
(309) 558-3545

Email: [vac@rockislandcountyil.gov](mailto:vac@rockislandcountyil.gov)  
Address: 4000 46th Avenue Rock Island, IL 61201



Support us by joining your local Veteran Service Organization

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced that women Veterans can now schedule appointments directly with VA gynecology providers without a referral from a primary care provider.

The new, streamlined process takes effect today and eliminates the previous requirement for a PCP referral to access VA gynecology care. Instead, enrolled women Veterans can schedule an appointment directly with a VA gynecology specialist if they choose.

The change will better serve the more than 1 million women Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care.

“This is what it looks like when VA is focused on putting Veterans first,” said **VA Secretary Doug Collins**. “By relentlessly focusing on customer service and convenience, we are building a department that works better for the men and women we are charged with serving.”

Today’s announcement is the latest in a long list of VA accomplishments during the second Trump Administration, including:

- The backlog of Veterans waiting for VA benefits is [down 57%](#) under the second Trump Administration, after increasing 24% during the Biden Administration.
- VA has [eliminated the backlog of Veteran families waiting for VA health care](#).
- VA is [processing record numbers of disability claims](#), reaching an all-time fiscal-year high of [three million claims processed Sept. 30](#).
- VA has opened [20 new health care clinics across the nation](#) since Jan. 20.
- Since Jan. 20, VA has offered Veterans more than 1.4 million appointments outside of normal operating hours. These early-morning, evening and weekend appointments are giving Veterans more timely and convenient options for care.
- VA [permanently housed 51,936 homeless Veterans](#) across the country in fiscal year 2025 – the highest total in seven years.
- VA is spending [an additional \\$800 million](#) on infrastructure improvements to ensure department facilities provide safe and effective patient care.
- VA has made it [easier](#) and [faster](#) for VA-enrolled Veterans to access care from non-VA providers at the department’s expense.
- VA has implemented [major reforms](#) to make it easier for survivors to get benefits, after [serious problems](#) during the Biden Administration.
- VA is [accelerating the deployment](#) of its integrated electronic health record system, after the program was nearly dormant for almost two years under the Biden Administration.
- VA partnered with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to identify and recover [\\$106 million in duplicate billing](#).
- VA has brought tens of thousands of employees [back to the office](#), where VA can work better as a team to serve Veterans.
- VA has [terminated union contracts for most bargaining unit employees](#) and [redirected millions in wasteful union spending back to Veterans](#).
- VA [ended DEI at the department](#), reversing the divisive Biden-era policies and stopping more than \$14 million in DEI spending.
- VA is [phasing out treatment for gender dysphoria](#). Frankly, this commonsense reform should have been done years ago.



IN THIS ISSUE

WOMEN CARE

GOLD STAR FAMILIES

NEWS

Letter from the Superintendent

AUTHOR NAME: BRAD BIGFORD

As we close out this calendar year. I’m extremely thankful for the support by our VAC Board that is serving Veterans through their Veteran organizations and by volunteering the time to vote on important issues for this Veterans Assistance Commission.

Some of the items that have been started by the VAC office this year:

1. Monthly Newsletter
2. More training participation
3. Integration and accountability of the VAC from the County Board
4. Improved transparency to the public through the RICO webpage.
5. Working with elected officials to promote veteran benefits
6. QC VA Community Resource and Referral Center outreach
7. QC VA Veteran Center outreach (starting JAN 2026)
8. A strong relationship with Black Hawk College
9. Facilitated inclusion of the IL Army National Guard with the Trinity CVEB board
10. Two additional Veteran Service Officers trained and accredited

There is more, but I wanted to just point out that your VAC is in the community and helping veterans.

Special thank you to Parris Silvis assistant superintendent, that has started this newsletter and providing Administration assistance to the VAC to improve our policies and processes.

With this team that has been formed, I’m confident that our assistance to veterans will be even better in 2026.



Anonymously Grateful helping Gold Star Families

AUTHOR: CORY HAWK

Anonymously Grateful is a 501©(3) non-profit organization that honors fallen service members and their families. We are 100% volunteer organization that raises money for Gold Star families by selling merchandise, donations, and sponsorships. We announce our honorees in November, then fund raise thru September. The weekend of September 11<sup>th</sup>, we hold a big banquet where we bring in the families and friends, we feed them, entertain them, and then split everything we raise amongst the families.

We currently are honoring 3 families. 2 KIAs and 1 who lost his battle to PTSD. Our first KIA with SGT Seth Garceau of the Iowa Army National Guard who was hit by an IED in Iraq on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005. He later passed away to those injuries in Germany on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Our second KIA is PFC Phillip Pannier of the US Army who was killed in combat during Operation Iraq Freedom on January 8th, 2008. Finally, our mental health honoree is PFC Tristian Hughes of the USMC. He died unexpectedly at Camp Lejeune on April 19, 2025

This year’s banquet will be held on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2026 in the Redstone Room in downtown Davenport. We will have a special guest speaker, Kris Paronto who is a former US Army Ranger and part of the 2012 Benghazi attack. He consulted on the movie 13 Hours which is based on those attacks.

Last year we raised over \$40,000 for our Gold Star families and this year we are already around \$10,000 funds raised. If you would like to read more about our organization or would like to donate you can follow us FaceBook or go to our website at anonymouslygrateful.org

Visit us here: <https://anonymouslygrateful.org/>

VA Benefit answers in your local Area

AUTHOR NAME: PARRIS SILVIS

**Davenport, IA – See us Every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday every Month at the Quad Cities VA Outpatient Clinic** to get any questions answered while maintaining your health. We will be providing information and providing appointment scheduling.

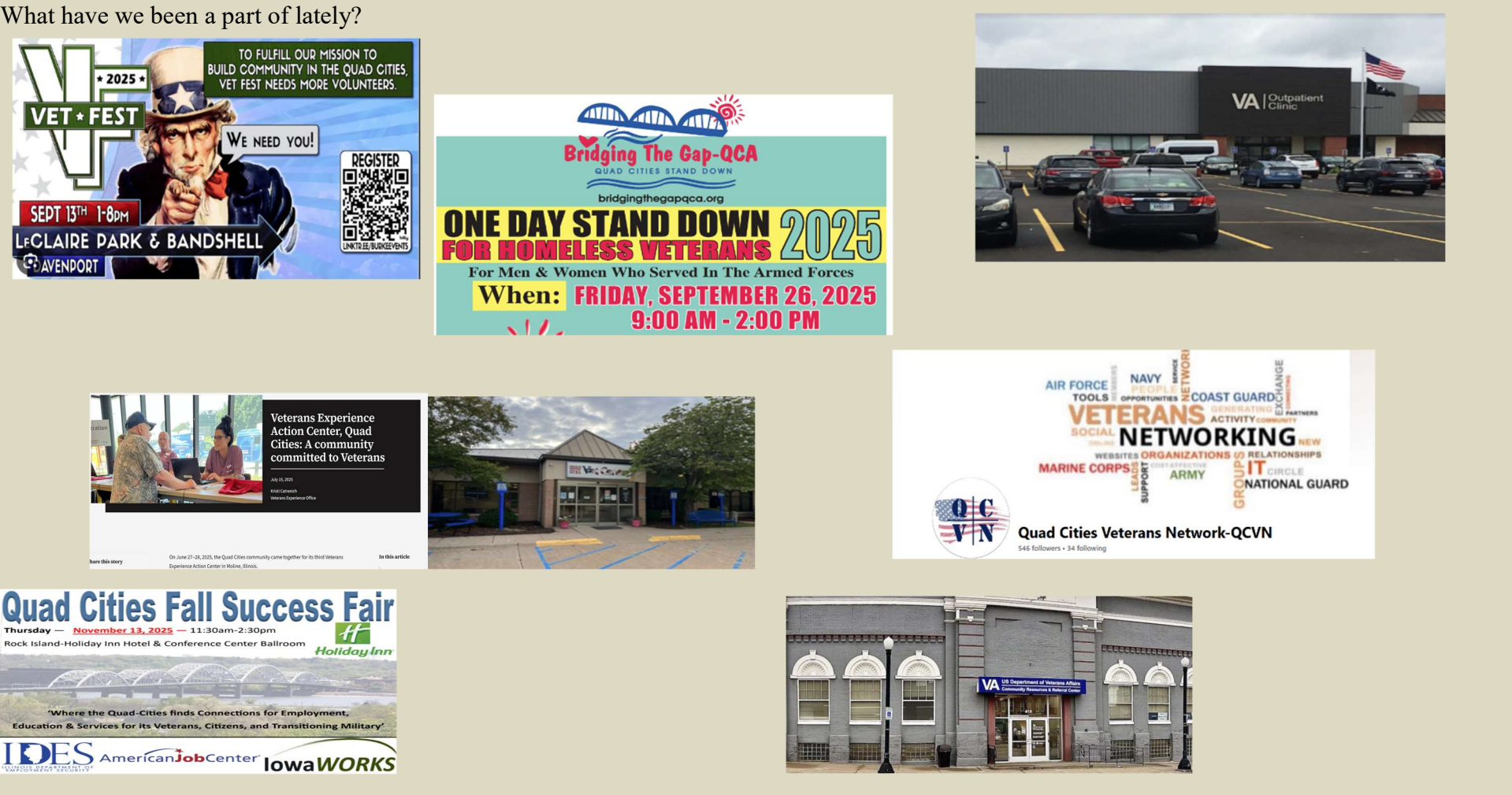
**NEW! - Davenport, IA – VA Community Resource and Referral Center** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month where we try to focus on indigent Veterans and make it easier for those who struggle with transportation to see a Veteran Service officer for the first time.

**Coming Soon! -East Moline, IL – Providing services in an additional location every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at the Vet Center** located at 465 Ave of the Cities East Moline, IL 61244. We will be providing information and providing appointment scheduling.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Author Name: Maria King

What have we been a part of lately?



Upcoming Events!!!!

Events with an “\*” are events that our office will take part in.

- \*Bring to Light Veterans Breakfast – January 3, 2026 8:00am @ Cornerstone Church Eldridge, IA (For all Veterans)
- Uncommon Valor Hero WOD – January 10, 2026 Time TBD See: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/356819109078330>

If you have or know of events and would us to place in our newsletter please reach out to [mking@rockislandcountyil.gov](mailto:mking@rockislandcountyil.gov)  
We appreciate your support in getting out information to our Veterans and their families.

Happy Holidays to all!!



## About Us

The Veterans Assistance Commission of Rock Island County (VACRICO) is made up of delegates and alternates from the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Vietnam Veterans of America, and other Veterans organizations in Rock Island County. These organizations make it possible for Rock Island County to staff full time Veteran Service Officers and administrative staff to support Veterans and their families.

The Veterans Assistance Commission is here to help all qualified Veterans with financial assistance and all VA benefit needs to include but not limited to below:

- **Disability (New, Appeals)**
- **Surviving Family Member benefits**
- **Burial Benefits**
- **Education**
- **VA Health Care Enrollment**

All Services provided here are free and open to all branches of the Armed Forces including all Reserve and National Guard components and their families.

### Annual Impact Statement for 2025:

New Veterans Served: 982  
VA Disability Claims Submitted: 3214  
VA Disability Compensation Awarded: \$3,156,898.55

We are open to performing outreach events supporting Veterans in the community and at your places of employment. Feel free to reach out to us to see if we can perform outreach at your event or places of employment.

## MONTHLY BOARD MEETING INFORMATION

Please visit below for information and details on our monthly board meetings:

<https://www.rockislandcountyil.gov/671/VACRICO-Board-Meeting-Information>

All Meetings begin at 7:00p.m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month.  
Schedule is on right and is used annually until a change is necessary starting November 2025.

### Introduction of **Staff: Members:**

**Brad Bigford – Superintendent / Veteran Service Officer**  
**Parris Silvis – Assistant Superintendent / Veteran Service Officer**  
**Cory Hawk – Veteran Service Officer**  
**Jason Willits – Veteran Service Officer**  
**Damion Daily – Veteran Service Officer**  
**Brian Habel – Veteran Service Officer**  
**Maria King – Administrative Assistant**  
**Erlinda Comstock – Administrative Assistant**

Please visit us at: <https://www.rockislandcountyil.gov/356/Veterans-Assistance>



**January:** RICOVAC 4000  
46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Rock Island, IL  
61201

**February:** American  
Legion 515 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue W.  
Milan, IL 61264

**March:** RICOVAC 4000  
46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Rock Island, IL  
61201

**April:** American  
Legion 829 16th Ave, East  
Moline, IL 61244

**May:** RICOVAC 4000  
46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Rock Island, IL  
61201

**June:** American Legion 515  
1<sup>st</sup> Avenue W. Milan, IL  
61264



LinkedIn

**July:** RICOVAC 4000  
46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Rock Island, IL  
61201

**August:** American Legion 829  
16th Ave, East Moline, IL  
61244

**September:** RICOVAC 4000  
46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Rock Island, IL  
61201

**October:** American Legion  
515 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue W. Milan, IL  
61264

**November:** RICOVAC 4000  
46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Rock Island, IL

**December:** No Meeting